

One of the most challenging uses of objects is as historic furnishings. When used to furnish a historic structure, the object is given the opportunity to convey the lifestyle and personality of the structure's historic occupants. To achieve this lofty goal, care must be taken to ensure that modern hygiene, current societal values, and housekeeping norms are not interjected into the recreated historic scene.

Another pitfall to avoid in managing a furnished historic structure is the rearrangement of the rooms once the furnishing curators leave. Many a tastefully-prepared furnished structure is reduced to a "period room" where the objects are rearranged as an open display. We have all seen the children's room where all the toys and dolls are lined up facing the tour route. Tours of such rearrangements result in nothing more than antique tours where individual objects and their monetary value overshadow the purpose and intent of the carefully recreated scene.

It is incumbent on the park curator, interpreter, and resource management specialist to ensure that museum collections are considered an asset to the park. This can be achieved only by making park museum collections a viable part of the park's resource base both from their resource management and educational values. We must ensure that museum collections and their documentation are consulted when management issues are considered; and we must ensure that museum collections are involved in park programs and activities.

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Elizabeth Banks

Using Resource Management Records

How extensive was the repair work on the interior of the Custom House in Salem in the 1880s, 1950s, 1970s? What problems were encountered in determining the historic paint colors? What photographs taken of the park since its establishment in 1938 show changes in the historic landscape? What park management issues and decisions in the 1930s have continued to be reviewed, questioned, and resolved in different ways? How have water quality issues in the rivers and harbor affected the area in the last 100 years? What park management decisions in the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s have affected the extent of research on historic landscapes, historic plant materials, land use, relationships with park neighbors, etc., that are recurring issues today? What information is contained in the park historians' desk files from the 1930s to the 1970s and how extensively were certain structures, features, and events researched? Is the park at risk of undertaking extensive research today that has already been accomplished?

Invariably the next question is, "What do we have in the files?" Finding the answer depends on the extent of preservation, organization, and access to the park records.

In January 1995, the Northeast Museum Services Center began a two-year project to conduct a Survey of Resource Management Records in the New England Cluster of the Northeast Field Area. This survey is focused on documenting the

natural and cultural resource management records in parks and centers. The survey will also review management needs and provide recommendations. Assistance with recommendations will include measures for basic protection and appropriate steps, including transfer of specific records to the National Archives and Records Administration, temporary storage, disposal, or accession into the museum collection.

While it is commonly accepted that museum records that document museum objects should remain in close association with the objects, this concept is less well recognized for other cultural and natural resources such as historic structures and landscapes. Records that document the integrity, history, condition, conservation treatments, and preservation requirements of natural and cultural resources are critical for current and future management. It is well established that archeological field notes, including sketches, maps and photographs, are cataloged with the artifacts from the associated site. Neither the artifacts nor the field notes have much research value without the other. Likewise, researchers cannot understand or extract significant data from architectural fragments without examination of the accompanying documentation. Both the documentation and the artifacts must be preserved to be accessible for research use.

The Researcher's Perspective

Like most agencies, the Park Service often seems unaware that its actions are making his-

tory and that this history is critical to the nation and its culture. How many superintendents of parks or, for that matter, historic sites and monuments staffed by professional historians, file annual reports adequately recording activities affecting the preservation and administration of their areas?

*The Park Service, as the principal preservation agency of the federal government, and its charges require far more research than is currently being done or contemplated. The conservation and preservation movements compose one of the fundamental American cultural stories of the 20th century.*¹

The recently revised 1994 edition of NPS-28, *Cultural Resource Management Guideline* addresses these issues consistently. Chapter 9 of this guideline, Management of Museum Objects, states:

*...Natural and cultural objects and their associated records provide baseline data, serving as scientific and historical documentation of the park's resources and purpose. All resource management records that are directly associated with museum objects are managed as museum property. These and other resource management records are preserved as part of the archival and manuscript collection because they document and provide an information base for the continuing management of the park's resources.*²

The National Park Service manages a complex, inter-related, and diverse wealth of natural and cultural resources. NPS staff and other researchers working on natural, cultural, and interdisciplinary projects require access to park resource management records. At the same time, they are creating significant resource management documentation, including a wide range of research proposals, base-line data, reports, preservation/maintenance treatments, and interpretation/education programs for ecosystems, endangered plants, landscapes, structures, archeological sites, museum objects, and archives. Management policies for the continued preservation and integrity of these documentary materials are outlined in NPS-28, *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*; NPS-77, *Natural Resource Management Guideline*; and NPS-19, *Records Management Guideline*. Records retention schedules in NPS-19 give specific direction as to the management of official copies of reports, correspondence, contracts, etc. Some records are designated to be transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration for permanent retention and access by researchers. "Non-official" copies, not designated for transfer to the National Archives, but needed for daily preservation and planning work at the park, are critical resources for effective park management.

Use of natural and cultural resource management archives by NPS staff and other researchers reflect different perspectives on the same research topic and the capacity of primary documents to answer new questions. For example, photographs taken 50 years ago to document historic structures may be re-examined with new questions in mind—what historic plants, paths, roads, viewsheds can be documented? Photographs of lakeshore conditions for natural resource research may be used by researchers today to document historic paths, roads, changes in viewsheds, existence of historic structures, etc., that were not the focus of previous research for the park.

Resource management documentation may also reveal changes in NPS management priorities at the national level and provide evidence of how these directives were merged with the on-going needs of the park. Conversely, the same archives may reveal how the needs of the park resources influenced servicewide management direction.

While many parks value their park records and frequently reference them in current management, other parks have little idea what is in the "old section" of the park files, or what is in another division's files. At the risk of sounding like a pronouncement from The Institute for the Criminally Obvious, research access to archival materials is dependent on knowledge of their existence and continuous management of them as a significant park resource. Knowledge of the wider context of park records may re-connect the park with other valuable resources. What park records are at the National Archives and Records Administration? What park records are at the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center? What park records are in the Land Resources Division or the Library of Congress?

The researchers' perspective on the significance of park records recurs throughout *CRM*, Vol. 16. No.1, 1993, which focuses on Administrative History. Many observations were made regarding the preservation, integrity, value of, and need for research access to NPS records. Barry Mackintosh states in his introductory article,

*All good history, administrative and otherwise, describes and evaluates people, events, ideas, and actions in the context of their own times rather than from a later perspective when definitions and other rules of the game may have changed.*³

Dwight Pitcaithley's article in this same issue of *CRM*, "Publishing Administrative Histories," addresses professional standards for conducting administrative histories. These standards require that historians, "1) are thorough in their research,..."⁴ Historians can only be thorough if the park records have been preserved according to

NPS guidelines. The immediacy of first-hand accounts of the issues of the past provide connections to the present.

Also in *CRM*, "Researching and Writing a History of Natural Resources Management," by Richard Sellars, includes his frustration and concern regarding the difficulties in gaining research access to NPS records.

It seems important not to rely solely on official reports and policy pronouncements but to determine what prompted them and identify differences of opinion.

Overall, the records situation gives clear and irrefutable evidence that the Park Service, which prides itself in presenting major historic sites to the American people, has not taken sufficient pride in its own history to develop a professional records program. 5

The two-year survey underway is a first step to focus attention on this issue and assist parks in managing and gaining the benefits of access to their documentary resources. Based on the needs identified by parks and centers, a basic standard operating procedure will be prepared at the conclusion of the project which will outline recommendations, list guidelines available, and resources available to NPS staff in records management.

The continued preservation and integrity of park resources is dependent on the preservation and integrity of their associated documentation. These records provide a key to answering countless questions.

Notes

1. Dilsaver, Lary, "Administrative History for History and Administration," *CRM* Vol. 16. No.1. 1993:6-7.
 2. NPS-28, *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, National Park Service, History Division, 1994: 145.
 3. "Administrative History—A Management Tool," *CRM* Vol.16. No.1. 1993:1,5.
 4. "Publishing Administrative Histories," *CRM* Vol.16. No.1. 1993:13,16.
 5. "Researching and Writing a History of Natural Resources Management," *CRM* Vol.16. No.1. 1993:4,24.
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Museum Collections in the Columbia Cascades Cluster

John Day Fossil Beds National Monument was authorized in 1974 to preserve a unique series of fossil beds in the John Day Valley of central Oregon. These fossil beds are some of the most diverse Miocene deposits in the world, and provide specimens of previously unidentified plants and animals of that era. Over the past decade paleontologist/curator Ted Fremd has sponsored the use of the park collections with numerous museums and universities.

Every fossil specimen must be considered as unique, even when there appear to be numerous examples (such as shark teeth or trilobites) extending even to the commercial market. This is particularly true of the more complex life forms from the more recent, species diverse, geologic periods. There have been cases in the paleontological community where a single, partial specimen can provide sufficient documentation to identify a new species of plant or animal.

It is in this context that curators such as Ted Fremd foster the scientific use of comparative col-

lections, largely through providing universities and museums with reproductions of specimens taken from molds of the originals. While this technique has also been used to duplicate some of the more rare stone tools from archeological investigations, the extensive use of molds to create study collections is particular to the science of paleontology. Because of their importance to the development of modern species, these reproductions of the fossil collections of John Day are well represented in teaching and exhibit collections in universities and museums around the world.

Authorized in 1965, Nez Perce National Historical Park, Idaho, is the only unit in the park system that commemorates an extant American Indian group. Consisting of 38 separate sites, the park preserves and interprets the history of the Nez Perce people, and their relationship with the developing European settlement of the Northwest. The park is the Nez Perce Tribe's "repository of choice" for the maintenance of archeological collections. Many of the ethnographic and historic items in the park collection are on loan from the